

Appl. No. 09/998,806  
Atty. Docket No. 8317  
Amdt. dated 7/13/2004  
Reply to Office Action of 12/12/03  
Customer No. 27752

#### REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 8-14, 16 and 17 have been canceled as redundant, in view of the amendments presented herewith. Claims 1-7, 15 and 18-29 are now in the case.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite the use of carded fibers in the multi-layer substrate. Basis is at page 8, l. 1. Claim 1 has been further amended to recite the (minimum) basis weight of the reservoir layer of about 15gsm. Basis is at page 6, l. 10. Claim 1 also now specifies that the layers are bonded to each other by patterned thermal bonding. Basis is at page 8, l. 24-29. It is submitted that all amendments are fully supported, and entry is requested.

#### Rejections Under 35 USC 103

All claims stand rejected over U.S. 4,853,281 in view of U.S. 4,837,078 and JP2000080522, for reasons of record at pages 2-3 of the Office Action.

Applicants respectfully traverse all rejections, to the extent they may apply to the claims as now amended.

The '281 patent relates solely to meltblown webs (Col. 1, l. 35) and is not suggestive of carded fibers, as in the present substrates.

Moreover, nothing in '281 teaches or suggests pattern-bonding the surface contacting layer to a reservoir layer, in the manner of the present invention. Instead, a generalized melting of the surface web to the supporting web of '281 is, apparently, all that is contemplated. See Col. 3, l. 33.

Finally, nothing in '281 teaches or suggests that hydrophilic polypropylene could, or should, be used to make the meltblown webs. Indeed, the disclosure in '281 at Col. 1, l. 35-37 regarding the asserted ability of the disclosed meltblown webs to absorb and hold fluid would appear to preclude any need for using hydrophilic polypropylene therein.

In short, these three key elements of the claims (as amended) are nowhere taught or suggested in '281.

U.S. '078 (Col. 3, l. 3) teaches wet facing webs which comprise "blended hydrophilic/hydrophobic components." A variety of such "blended" components are listed at Col. 3, l. 4-7 as such "hydrophilic/hydrophobic" components. In each instance the "hydrophobic" component is polyolefin. Said another way, no hydrophilic polyolefin, such as the hydrophilic polypropylene employed herein, is contemplated by this disclosure. Accordingly, '078 adds nothing to '281, with respect to this claim element.

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JP '522 teaches hydrophilic polyolefin-based fiber for various uses. However, it neither teaches nor suggests its use in carded, pattern-bonded laminates of the present type. In particular, it does not suggest the use of such fibers with hydrophobic fibers in such laminates.

Moreover, it is submitted that neither '078 nor JP '522 are fairly combinable with U.S. '281, in the sense of §103, to arrive at the present invention.

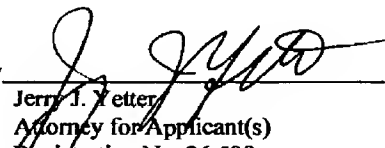
First, '078 simply treats "polyolefin" fibers as hydrophobic. As noted, its disclosure regarding such fibers adds nothing to the teachings of '281 regarding melt-blown polypropylene. It certainly does not suggest substituting hydrophilic polypropylene for the polypropylene of '281.

Second, nothing in JP '522 suggests that its hydrophilic fibers should, or could, be substituted for the polypropylene of either '281 or '078. Instead, '078 requires the use of hydrophobic fibers – and those are listed as polyolefins. Also as noted, '281 teaches the fluid-handling virtues of its melt-blown fibers. Hence, any need for hydrophilic fibers per JP '522 is, presumably, nil.

To summarize: Absent hindsight, it is submitted that nothing in the cited documents teaches or suggests the combination of their respective disclosures to arrive at the present invention. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are therefore requested.

In light of the foregoing, early and favorable action is requested.

Respectfully submitted,  
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